



Wartime Women Rape: A Means of Moral Attack and Emasculation in Lynn Nottage's *Ruined*

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Abstract

Women rape at warfare was considered a consequence of war in the social, literary and political world for a long period of time. Some criminals of rape escaped justice and others were persecuted on the basis that they were involved in mass rape because it was a natural consequence of war. But, women are targeted with rape in time of war because they are the symbolic representation of a culture, ethnicity, and the unifying fabric of their people and nation. The objective of this paper is to show that war rape is not a result of war; instead it is a means of human destruction through moral attack and emasculation. It aims to show that women rape in warfare is neither a misogynist act nor a sexual violence but it is a pre-planned weapon used strategically and systematically to fulfill certain political and military agenda. The study focuses on the sexual abuse of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo in time of war in Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize play, *Ruined* (2007). The study applies Jonathan Gottschall's *Strategic Rape theory*, which highlights war rape as a pre-planned military strategy. The enemy emasculates men and attacks them morally by raping their women. Consequently, men's failure to protect their women causes them to give up resistance, leave their lands and families because of shame and humiliation. The study concludes that women rape in time of war is a tactic followed by conquerors intentionally to facilitate and guarantee the achievement of certain pre-planned goals as was the case of mass rape in the DRC.

Keywords: women rape, strategy, emasculation, moral attack, strategic rape theory

The problem [of rape] is destroying our households and families, foreigners are coming and raping our wives, devastating them. Since you are not God or an angel, you will stop loving her. That is why we say those people are ruining our communities.

Man, Bukavu

Characterizing Sexual Violence in the DRC.

1. Introduction

Lynn Nottage's *Ruined* (2007) treated the problem of women rape and sexual violence in the civil war of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This deadly war, occurred between 1998-2003 was waged to control the DRC's natural minerals and fortunes. The death toll according to reports by the International Rescue Committee was estimated at 5.4 million, making it the deadliest war since World War II. Despite the staggering death toll, sexual violence is considered as one of the main devastating features of this war. Even after the end of the second Congolese war in 2002, killing and sexual violence continued steadily. The continued violence and human rights abuses, particularly rape, had been largely connected to issues of ethnic violence and disputes over the control of Congo's natural mineral resources like, coltan, gold and diamonds. The main feature of rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo was its brutality. Many victims suffered many physical damages like fistulas and sexually transmitted illnesses like HIV/AIDS. (Victoor, 2010:6) A shift has been observed in warfare tactics, especially after the recent civil conflicts of the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and the DRC whereby mass rape of women became a fruitful instrument of war, instead of fighting on the front lines. This shift caused a critical change in the theorization of rape in times of war. It came to be perceived as a weapon of war and no longer as a feminist issue related to gender and patriarchy. (ibid,7)

In order to explore how wartime rape is strategized, the present paper analyzes Nottage's staging of female bodies in war milieu in her play *Ruined*. Textual analysis is supported by applying Jonathan Gottschall's *Strategic Rape Theory* (2004) to explore the purpose of using rape as an effective weapon for realizing far-reaching objectives. The focus is directed towards women who experienced war rape in the Congo; it was not so much an act of hatred towards these women but more as a means of destruction of a nation's dignity and manhood. In order to realize such an aim through minimum effort and cost, the militants adopted rape as a ploy to achieve this end. Thus, this study tries to prove that women rape is an organized policy and strategy, and not merely a sexual act, or an act of dominance and misogyny.

This study reconsiders the feminist representation of rape in war zones because feminist studies overlooked the intended nature of war rape. In addition, the feminist perspectives on sexual abuse did not help in denouncing rape; instead it encouraged the exercise of rape extensively in time of war under the umbrella of the natural extension for peacetime rape. Thus, this paper tries to create a new awareness into the strategic nature of rape in times of armed conflicts, by showing its pre-planned objectives towards achieving their goals with minimum cost and effort.

2. Literature Review

Most of the previous literary studies on rape drew no attention to rape at warfare. Their main interest was directed toward peacetime rape that was not committed by combatants or militias but by civilians against civilians. The main feature of these studies was their focus on rape action as a feminist issue that was attributed solely to gender conflicts between male and female in a patriarchal society. Many types of rape at peacetime were treated such as domestic rape, incest, and marital rape. Actually, earlier studies missed the differentiation between rape at peacetime and wartime. In addition, the traumatic studies focused more on the psychological consequences of rape and sexual violence. High range of these studies at peacetime connected between rape and patriarchy in a way or another.

To list some studies on rape, a study was conducted by Zabihzadeh, S. et al entitled *Domestic Violence against Women in Atiq Rahimi's The Patience Stone* (2015). In this study, the author examined the domestic sexual violence of Afghani women as a highly engendered phenomenon resulting from the systems of gender inequality and sex power hierarchy that was prevalent in Afghan's society. (51)

A Marital rape was considered one type of many of peacetime rape. This issue of sexual violence was dealt with in a literary article by Lairenmayum Puinyabati entitled *Treatment Of Conflict and Discord in Husband-Wife Relationship in Shashi Deshpande's The Dark Holds No Terrors* (2014), to shed light on this type of rape. The novel focused on the problems of marital disharmony – the conflict and discord in husband-wife relationship that led to husband's rape of his wife. The wife's success and empowerment turned him to a rapist since he had no other means to practice his power and dominance over her.

Another literary study regarding rape and sexual violation and their hysteric symptoms at peacetime was done by Abdullah, et al in his article *Manifestations of Hysteria in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero* (2015). The study was conducted in relation to hysteria in the light of Freudian theory. The study stated that sexual violations experienced by the female character led to the rise of hysteria. The study explored these hysteric symptoms and the actions taken by the character in order to overcome these symptoms for the sake of proving her identity.

There were also some studies written on Nottage's *Ruined*. An earlier study by Jennifer Belliveau (2013) entitled *Conflict Rape: An Ecofeminist Exegesis of the American Portrayal of Rape in African Conflict Regions* (2013) addressed the unpleasant topic of conflict mining in Nottage's *Ruined* (2007) and Edward Zwick's film *Blood Diamond* (2006). Belliveau analysed *Ruined* through an ecofeminist lens by connecting the feminist issues of women rape with the environment. The rape of mother earth can be likened to the way in which women are commodified and raped. Although the study framed the play with ecofeminism, it is still a feminist reading since the environment is in fact a feminist issue too. Belliveau's study considered war rape as an ecofeminist issue, and it overlooked the instrumental and strategic aggression of rape, which is the objective of the present study.

In another paper entitled *She'd Make a Splendid Freak: Female Bodies on the American Stage* (2012), Carolina Sanchez-Palencia & Eva Gil Cuder analysed three American plays that talked about female bodies and their representation on stage by three contemporary American female dramatists. One of these plays tackled was Nottage's *Ruined*. The purpose of the article was to analyze the medium of theater by three women dramatists to condemn the way patriarchal scrutiny traditionally dissected and objectified women's bodies. The paper showed how the feminist discourse endeavours to destabilize normative notions of femininity; paradoxically, it may result in a misleading representation of female corporealities as well as accentuating these notions instead of dismantling them.

A genocidal study was conducted by Robert Skloot (2010) in his paper *Old Concerns and New Plays in the Theater of Genocide*. The study represented *Ruined* as one of seven recent dramatic works concerned with genocide. It exemplified the play as *Theater of Genocide*. While Skoolt focused on murder in *Ruined*, Nottage highlighted women's rape in times of war as policy and strategy of moral and physical destruction, not only death. Even though war rape has been deadly for most victims, its strategic aim is not taken into consideration in this study. Thus, whilst Skoolt's study was limited to genocide, the present paper demonstrates the genocidal aspect of war rape through its termination of the reproductive ability of women by destroying their wombs and genitals for the sake of showing the strategic effect of rape.

3. Jonathan Gottschall's *Strategic Rape Theory*

The present article applies Jonathan Gottschall's *Strategic Rape theory* (2004) as a conceptual framework in the textual analysis of Nottage's play *Ruined*. Gottschall argues that rape can serve as a strategic and purposeful action, a tool and weapon, that has intended consequences such as demoralization, disintegration of social fabric, submission, ethnic cleansing, etc. (2004, 131). In other words, he claims that sexual violence is used to achieve strategic aims. Under strategic rape theory, rape is used to terrorize, demoralize, humiliate, oppress, and dehumanize groups of people for political, social, and economic gains by instilling fear, defenselessness, and humiliation. Gottschall states that rape has the following characteristics:

- Rape is like bombs, bullets, or propaganda.
- Rape is a tactic executed by soldiers in the service of larger strategic objectives.
- Wartime rape is coherent, coordinated, logical, and brutally effective means of prosecuting warfare.
- Rape is used systematically as a strategic weapon by soldiers to destroy, terrorize, demoralize, humiliate and emasculate.
- The collective identity and manhood of the offended society are targeted.
- Women are raped not because they are women but because they symbolize their community, religion and ethnicity.
- Men are emasculated by raping their women because they lose their manhood's sense of pride.
- This strategy of moral attack will be devastating and workable in the societies which are conservative.
- Women suffer in these types of communities from rejection and abandonment. (Ibid., 129-131)

4. Discussion: Nottage's *Ruined*

Nottage's *Ruined* (2007) is centered on the violent experiences of rape and sexual abuse of women and their sufferings in wartimes. Nottage contextualizes war in her play by framing it within a geographical and political context i.e. the Congo civil war (1998-2003). Her play is based on real experiences of Congolese women who survived the atrocities of the civil war. Her play was set against the backdrop of a brothel in the Congo during the war. Nottage's accurate representation of the female body as a weapon of war moves her play and her female characters away from the cultural stereotypes of domesticity. In this way, she subverts the traditional meaning of femininity that is often associated with domesticity, and endeavours to communicate a new awareness of war rape.

Lynn and her director, Kate Whoriskey made a trip to Uganda to witness the atrocities of the civil war. Lynn wanted to document the horrors of war crimes against humanity in her play. In Uganda, she met many Congolese women victims of war rape. This was her inspiration behind *Ruined* in 2007, to portray rape as an instrument of emasculation and violence against women. She was at once, obsessed and amazed at how human beings can employ such despicable tactics to achieve such deadly ends. (Ruined, 2009, xi)

In *Ruined*, Nottage identified and highlighted the exploitation of women's bodies during the Congo civil war. She stated this reality in her introduction of the play when she said: "The human body becomes the weapon, the teenage boy the terror, and a woman's womb "the battleground" (Ruined, xi). Her metaphoric use of women's wombs as battlegrounds demonstrated their strategic use in warfare. A woman's womb, the reproductive organ of the female, was targeted as a means by which the enemy achieved their pre-planned objectives of war. It became the tool by which her nation's continuity and dignity were destroyed. Women turned to be like lands on which wars are fought in order to instill fear, humiliation, demoralization and emasculation as Gottschall argues in his theory (Gottschall: 131) Nottage stated that mass rape of the Congolese women cannot be attributed to misogyny, domination and control of women or satiation of natural sexual desires. Salima, one of the characters in the play delivered this fact before she died towards the end of the play; she committed suicide because she had been raped and impregnated, and then abandoned by her husband: "You will not fight your battles on my body anymore" (2009, 94) Salima symbolises the Congolese women and her body collectively implies their wombs and genitals. Land and womb are metaphorically juxtaposed throughout the play. It implies that woman's body is abused sexually by rape and mutilation by bayonets as a strategic weapon that has far-reaching consequences. In the Congo, mass rape was meant to demoralize and emasculate men in order to control their lands.

Woman's womb here works like the unifying productivity of her nation. By destroying this unity, the nation's continuity and productive power will be diminished and even terminated. More importantly, the nation's dignity and that of her men and their manhood would be humiliated and their fear of this shame would diminish their resistance. Men's failure to protect their women emasculates them. In this way, Gottschall explains the physical and moral damage of war rape in his theory:

It is credited with spreading debilitating terror, diminishing the resistance of civilians, and demoralizing, humiliating, and emasculating enemy soldiers who are thereby shown to have failed in their most elemental protective duties. (Gottschall, 131)

In times of war, emasculation and moral attack are secured through the strategy of rape. "Emasculate somebody to make a man feel that he has lost his male role or qualities" or "to make somebody/something less powerful or less

effective (Oxford Dictionary). Men feel dishonored and humiliated when they fail to protect their women from being raped. Consequently, they will be rendered powerless and ineffective. Women's honor and virginity factor decisively in society and their husbands' sense of self-esteem. In this regard, mass rape effectively echoes the symbolic humiliation of the male opponent. By defiling women's bodies by rape and sexual violence, women and their men are dishonoured and humiliated. Their genealogy too would be dishonored. In the context of war and armed conflicts, the concept of lineage extends to the entire ethnic group or culture. (Snyder, 2006: 190)

This fact was clearly expressed in the play when Christian, a travelling salesman, tried to convince Mama Nadie who was the owner of a brothel, to accept Sophie. She was Christian's niece, who was raped and ruined physically by the militias and forsaken by her family and community. He told Mama Nadie: "And as you know the village isn't a place for a girl who has been...ruined. It brings shame, dishonor to the family." (2009:15) Ruined, in this context is the physical destruction of her genitals by rape. This fact was revealed through dialogue when Mama Nadie asked Sophie about this damage by referring to her genitals: "(Mama gestures toward her own genitals.) But damaged, am I right?" And the answer came from Christian "Yes... Look. Militia did ungodly things to the child, took her with...a bayonet and then left her dead." (13) It is obvious that rape had caused her untold trauma through the abandonment by her family and people, and the permanent physical pain as shown in: "(Sophie shifts with discomfort. Her body aches, tears escape her eyes. Mama uses her skirt to wipe Sophie's eyes)" (16)

To intensify the destructive nature of war rape, Mama again inquired whether the militia soldiers had hurt Sophie: "Did they hurt you badly?" Sophie whispers "... yes." (16). It is a rhetorical question but meant to showcase Nottage's artistic skill in capturing the destructive nature of war rape. At the end of the play, although Mama Nadie, the owner of the brothel where Sophie worked, tried to help her to seek treatment for her condition by selling a piece of raw diamond, her gesture of goodwill raised some doubts. Sophie missed the car that was supposed to take her to Bunia, for her much needed fistula surgery. Nottage captured the chaos of war milieu in her play: (The stage is flooded with intense light. The sound of chaos, shouting, gunfire, grows with intensity. Government soldiers pour in...) (92). It is of course a symbolic technique that Nottage employed in order to express the disastrous and dreadful nature of war rape, as well as the chaotic nature of war itself. It is a significant reminder to the audience that war rape and its moral and physical consequences are irreversible. This was enhanced by the fact that Sophie remained unhealed and limps throughout the play. Her physical condition throughout the performance served "to remind the audience of a wound that will not heal without treatment—the violation remains a source of perpetual pain for Sophie and we are made to realize that this will not simply go away. Her trauma will not heal without specialized attention." (Rebecca, 2013:135) Although the play offered a glimmer of hope and a better future for Sophie, who confessed to Salima that she had embezzled money from Mama Nadie's profits in hopes of getting corrective surgery, it ended with Sophie's unfulfilled dream.

The disastrous effects of rape extended far beyond the physical and psychological damage; it severed the familial fabric of unity that woman stands for. Sophie was lucky in that she found Christian, who saved her by bringing her to Mama Nadie, business woman and owner of a brothel in the Congo. Having been ostracized by her family and society because she had been raped, she was guaranteed a safe life in the brothel. He exposed this fact: "You're a lucky girl. You're lucky you have such a good uncle. A lot of men would've left you dead." (Ruined, 19)

It is a very painful reality that Nottage revealed through Christian's dialogue. The psychological effects of rape on Sophie were very clear. She was all smiles when Mama Nadie allowed her to stay and work at her brothel but when Christian reminded her of the bitter reality, her smile disappeared. It is of course an exceptional and rare case but the perception of society is the opposite. The raped woman became vulnerable and forlorn.

Another means of destructive rape by moral attack and emasculation is demonstrated and proven in the play, through the character of Salima. She was another case of instrumental rape. She was taken away by force from her home to the bush "One of the soldiers held me down with his foot. He was so heavy, thick like ox His boot was pressing my chest ..." (69) She tried to resist them "I fought them" but she couldn't of course because she was a weak woman and they were so many. She went on to describe the story of her gang rape by multiple soldiers:

But they still took me from my home. They took me through the bush-raiding thieves. Fucking demons! "she is for everyone, soup to be had before dinner," that is what someone said. They tied me to a tree by my foot, and then came whenever they wanted soup...I lay there as they tore me to pieces, until I was raw.....five months. Five months. Chained like a goat. (69)

Kate Whorisky, the director of *Ruined*, expressed this reality of gang rape after having interviewed many Congolese women with Nottage: "I realized that it was not just a toll to humiliate the women or to degrade the opposing side's masculinity, it was a way to strip women of their wombs. All but one of the women interviewed were raped by multiple men." (Ruined, xi) Thus, her words revealed many truths: first, rape is a strategy adopted in war zones to humiliate woman because she symbolizes the enemy, as well as to degrade her husband and her nation's masculinity. In addition, woman is raped by multiple men, as a means to destroy her womb because it is the reproductive organ of her nation and ethnicity. Actually, these objectives were dramatized in *Ruined* by Salima and Sophie; Salima was humiliated by rape which dishonoured her husband and society, hence she was ostracized by both. In these conservative societies, woman

represents man's honor and dignity, thus when she is raped, man's dignity and honor is trodden upon and stolen from him. This was expressed again when Fortune, Salima's husband rejected his wife Salima. His cousin Simon told him this bitter truth: "If you're angry, then be angry at the men who took her. Think about how they did you, they reached right into your pocket and stole from you" (74). This is a form of emasculation which implies that woman in this society is a possession of man, yet he is unable to protect his woman when she is taken from him by force. But this possession, like humiliation, is not merely private but a public one too. The significance of this strategy of emasculation and moral attack in the Congo war was effectively dramatized in the play via familial and social ostracisation of the raped women.

The bitter reality of women's rejection by husbands, family and society demonstrates the demoralization and humiliation brought upon them by the strategic action of rape. This was clearly portrayed by Salima in the play. She expressed her trauma when she refused to meet her husband who had abandoned her when she was raped. She pathetically said "I walked into the family compound expecting wide open arms. An embrace. Five months, suffering. I suffered every single second of it. And my family gave me the back of their heads." She says of her husband: "And he, the man I loved since I was fourteen, chased me away with a green switch. He beat my ankles raw. And I dishonored him? I dishonored him?!" (Ruined, ii, 70). Gottschall's *Strategic Rape Theory* outlines the objectives behind wartime rape. One of these objectives is to weaken and destroy families, communities and nations. Woman is the unifying and propagative element in a family unit. Thus, by destroying woman, the familial and national fabric will be destroyed. As a result, men are emasculated and demoralized by their women who have become 'spoils of war', thus forsaking their women. (Gottschall: 131)

Salima missed her family who abandoned her out of shame for a crime she was not responsible for. She told Sophie:

I ... I ... miss my family. My husband. My baby-..... This morning I was thinking about Beatrice and how much she liked banana. I feed her like this. I squeeze banana between my fingers and let her suck them, and she'd make a funny little face. Such delight. Delight. (*Emotionally*) (32)

She was traumatized by her separation from her husband and daughter. She was considered a whore or worse, as Josephine, another female character at Mama Nadie's bar, said: "... I'm sorry, but let me say that what we all know, you are something worse than a whore. So many men have had you that you're worthless." (37) Her bitter words were but the shocking truth; in Congolese society, when woman is raped, she is dishonored and also dishonors her family and community. She is likened to a whore who sells her body and honour in exchange for money. Josephine drew a parallel between Salima who was gang raped by many soldiers, and the whore who sold herself for money. Josephine's judgment of Salima reflected that of her whole community. It is this form of dishonor that the enemy seeks in order to effectively destroy communities. It is accurate to say that: "Rapes of captured women by soldiers of one communal or national group [are] aimed principally at humiliating the men of an opposing group" (Enloe, 2000: 110). Like conquered lands, the female body is used as a territory of shame and revenge on other men, who in turn often project this shame and humiliation onto the victims themselves. It is obvious that the enemy was aware of the disastrous effects of rape in the DRC. In return, the pre-planned and far-reaching objectives behind the waged war would be realized.

For this reason, women in these types of communities suffer from rejection and abandonment from their husbands and society as well. It means that by rape, the familial unity and fabric are destroyed because woman in such African societies like Congo is the unifying element. By raping women, the relationship between woman and her family and between man and woman is altered. Moreover, man's dignity and honor are targeted because his woman: wife, sister or daughter is the precious thing he has. His honor is tainted when his woman is raped. It is a humiliation as well as emasculation of men because men will not be able to protect or prevent the rape of their women. Their resistance will be diminished and their destruction will be guaranteed by spreading fear and terror. (Gottschall, 131) In this way, destruction of the strong familial unit represented by woman is made easier and more effective with rape. It is safe to say that gender has no role or importance in this martial and strategic act, because it attacks the enemy community by destroying its reproductive power and masculinity, discriminately. This is the strategic nature of war rape that Gottschall explains in his theory:

It is credited with spreading debilitating terror, diminishing the resistance of civilians, and demoralizing, humiliating, and emasculating enemy soldiers who are thereby shown to have failed in their most elemental protective duties. (131)

Women have been stereotyped as 'angels of the house' in an endeavour to keep women in the confines of domesticity, but once she is raped, she will be driven away as an indication of shame and dishonor. When there is no hope for justice, the "raped women are a shame to their own families and often expelled from their own communities" (Carmen, 2012: 134) This strategy of war rape severs all unity and spawns shame and dishonour on family and society. Families and communities will be compelled to leave their lands, fearing shame and humiliation. Sophie and Salima were both abandoned for bringing shame upon their families. The mass rape of Congolese women was symbolic of dominance and destruction through its tactical uses. Demoralization and emasculation, fear and shame, uproot families and communities, thus facilitating the enemy's objectives of usurping mineral rich lands. The beneficiaries of war will

harvest the economic gains from the ruined. Gottschall posits in his *Strategic Rape theory* that “rape is a tactic executed by soldiers in the service of larger strategic objectives. (131)

Crimes of mass rapes have been documented in the Congo, Bosnia and Rwanda. These crimes were pre-planned in order to realize specific objectives, mainly, to control the countries’ natural resources like minerals. Rape is thus employed as the main tool by which to realize such objectives with minimal cost and effort, by first destroying the reproductive and sexual organs of women and then demoralizing and emasculating men. By destroying woman’s reproductive organs: wombs and genitals as well as their familial relationships, their existence is blown asunder. These war objectives were well enacted in *Ruined* through Sophie’s and Salima’s history.

According to Gottschall, the strategic nature of rape as a means of destruction works like bombs, bullets and propaganda in its destructive nature. It is not necessary for the enemy to kill and destroy by resorting to traditional war weaponry. He underscores the deadfall nature of rape in times of war in his theory:

A consensus has been building that wholesale rape represents just another ordinance—like bombs, bullets, or propaganda—that a military can use to accomplish its strategic objectives; rape is a tactic executed by soldiers in the service of larger strategic objectives. (Gottschall, 131)

Taking into consideration the collective damage, war rape is as effective as killing. It can be called genocidal rape because of its systematic elimination of the nation’s progeny. Gottschall wants those who advocate his Strategic Rape theory, to call this type of rape “genocidal rape” (131). The Security Council contends that “rape and other forms of sexual violence could constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or constitutive acts with respect to genocide” (Heaton 2009:16). In (2008), it was recognized that “widespread and systematic sexual violence was a security problem that should be monitored by the Council. Systematic sexual violence, without a doubt, can be every bit as destructive to communities as more conventional weapons.” (ibid, 16) Thus, affirmation helps to acknowledge the systematic and genocidal rape of Congolese women on a collective level that equates it with the deadly effects of bullets and bombs. Both have the propensity to terminate human life, albeit differently.

In this sense, Sophie and Salima, who represented Congolese women, were no longer female bodies that were exploited or violated by men as an act of power and dominance but symbolic bodies for their religion, nation and ethnicity. They were used as weapons to destroy everything related to their ethnicity; hence they were raped and utilized sexually to prove the supremacy over the enemy. This is the moral attack. Demoralization and emasculation are strategic consequences of rape by which a nation is destroyed and her natural resources controlled. Thus, it involves power and dominance on the collective level, not only the individual. Herein lies the innovation and difference in *the Strategic Rape theory* over other previous theories on rape. According to the *Strategic Rape theory*, rape is used to destroy, terrorize, demoralize, humiliate and emasculate women en-masse, as well as the manhood of the offended society. (Gottschall, 131) So, the strategic rape seeks to exercise dominance over an entire community. Therefore, women rape in *Ruined* according to this theoretical framework is not a misogynist act nor a natural consequence of war but a policy of humiliation and destruction of their community.

It is therefore clear from this perspective that war rape should be massive and on a high rate in order to be considered intended and instrumental. Actually, this interpretation is also set by Gottschall in his theory; for him, the strategic nature of mass rape is decided on the basis of its mischievous effect on an enemy population. It is also decided on the basis that the group considers it as strategic. This awareness of the motives and results from the side of the attacker must be agreed upon in order to be considered intended and strategic. (Gottschall: 131)

The identification of the intended nature of sexual violence against the Congolese women in *Ruined* helps to raise awareness against the strategic use of war rape against civilians, as well as correctly label it as a crime of war against humanity. Nottage has succeeded in raising awareness of the strategies and consequences of war rape through her dramatic play. The research proves that war rape, as in the Congo, was not an ordinary or natural action resulting from wars and conflicts, but an intentional tool. It was an organized weapon used extensively by soldiers and militias of the conflicted groups at rates. According to Gottschall, ‘At rates’ is an important expression and requirement for war rape to be considered as a strategic weapon. He puts this condition in his theory defining wartime rape:

The term *wartime rape*, as it is employed in the literature, never indicates isolated examples of rape by individual fighters. Rather, the term is used interchangeably with *mass wartime rape* to indicate distinct patterns of rape by soldiers at rates that are much increased over rates of rape that prevail in peacetime. (2004, 129)

Based on this definition of wartime rape and Salima’s dialogue with Sophie in *Ruined*, Salima expressed an important aspect to the strategic nature of rape against her and hundreds of Congolese women. She differentiated between the miners who came to find comfort and pleasure in Mama Nadie’s, after their long and hard work in the mines and the soldiers who wanted more from her: “The soldiers don’t respect nothing. The miners, they easy, they want drink, company, and it’s over. But the soldiers, they want more of you, and” (*Ruined*, 31). She urged Sophie to explain what is

meant by “more” by asking her: “Did that man do something to hurt you?” (31). Salima explained that a soldier boasted just before sex about having killed fifteen people from her tribe, the “Hema”:

You know what he say? He says fifteen Hema men were shot dead and buried in their own mining pit, in mud so thick it swallow them right into the ground without mercy. He say, one man stuff the coltan into his mouth to keep the soldiers from stealing his hard work, and they split his belly open with a machete. (31)

The soldier was proud of his barbaric actions: “It’ll show him for stealing,” he says, bragging like I should be congratulating him.” (31) What was worse than this was that she has to have sex with him and appease his guilt even though she knew that he was a killer of many of her tribesmen. “And then he fucked me, and when he was finished he sat on the floor and wept. He wanted me to hold him. Comfort him.” (31) Sophie queried if she did but Salima retorted: “No. I’m Hema. One of those men could be my brother.” (31)

In this scene, Nottage draws a connection between violence, profit and sex in this civil war. Salima’s dialogue revealed many things. First of all, a civil war and armed conflict was raging in Congo. The main motive behind this conflict was the mining of first grade coltan and other minerals. Nottage herself spoke of the injustice against women in her description of this war:

A slow simmering armed conflict that continues to be fought on several fronts, even though the war officially ended in 2002 . . . [there is] one war being fought for natural resources between militias funded by the government and industry . . . [there is also] the remnants of a civil war, which is the residue of the genocide in Rwanda that spilled over the border into Congo . . . [and then] the war being waged against women. (Payne, 2010: 26)

Her clarification implies that women were attacked and violated by rape as a tactic adopted by the conflicted parties to achieve economic and financial gains. Thus, woman was at the forefront of this war. Woman in this sense was not the end but the means to control the natural minerals and fortunes. Nottage exposes this reality in her play *Ruined* through the character of Mr Harari, a Lebanese diamond merchant, who told Mama Nadie about the high value of the raw diamond or the coltan which was given to her by one of the soldiers in exchange for sexual services with one of her bar’s girls:

Well, my darling, in this damnable age of the mobile phone it’s become quite the precious ore, no? And for whatever reason, God has seen fit to bless your backward country with an abundance of it. Now if that young man had come to me, I would’ve given him enough money to buy pussy for a month. Even yours. (*Ruined*, 25).

5. Results and Discussion

Unlike the past literary studies that focused on women’s rape at peace time context, this paper is concerned with rape at warfare settings which is perpetrated by combatants against the civilians. Thus, the study finds that the motives and features of the strategic wartime rape are totally different from that at peace times. Congolese women’s rape in the Congo civil war was a pre-planned and systematic tactic employed to achieve far reaching strategic objectives, rather than considering it as a part of male-dominated culture that is ruled by patriarchal and gendered systems as shown in the feminist and psychological studies of Zabihzadeh (2015), Puinyabati (2014) and Abdullah et al (2015). Due to deep gender interpretation of rape, these feminist studies did not succeed in recognizing the difference between the private and the public in different contexts. This overlap resulted in accentuating the misrepresentation of the female’s corporealities instead of dismantling them as in the studies of Palencia & Cuder (2012) who concluded that war and man are alike in their natural tendency to violate and transgress woman’s own identity physically and psychically. Differently, the present paper discovers that war rape is intentionally adopted for eradicating the Congolese race and ethnicity to achieve strategic aims, instead of considering it a misogynist act. It proves that the ethnic cleansing through demoralizing and emasculating men with raping their women is a better explanation for war time rape at DRC.

Another finding of the paper is that women’s identity is not an individual but a metaphoric one. Thus, the Congolese’s women’s bodies are violated because they are the representative of their community’s identity and ethnicity. This tactic is executed by soldiers and militias to violate the public identity and dignity of the Congolese people. In such a context, rape transcends the sexual violation of an individual to include the collective identity of the targeted nation, ethnicity and religion. This finding goes against the conclusion of Belliveau (2013) who associates the rape of the woman to the rape of earth to show the commodification of both. Woman, according to these studies is still an individual entity that is violated by man for hierarchal considerations, whereas this study discovers that women’s body is not private but a collective entity, which is transgressed for strategic political and military aims.

6. Conclusion

The present article concludes that war time rape of women in Nottage's *Ruined* is different from that at peacetime. War time highlights the adverse situation of women because they become significant tools for strategic and military agenda. In this way, woman's body and specifically her womb become battlefields in the DRC war. Moral attack and emasculation through war time rape are the means of strategic destruction according to Gottschall's *Strategic Rape theory*. Therefore, sexual violence mainly rape, as enacted in *Ruined* ceases to be an act of sexual gratification or misogyny. It becomes a policy used as a tool of war by the conflicted armed forces in order to prove their superiority over the other side and to achieve specific strategic aims like controlling the mining of minerals as in the case of the Congo civil war. More importantly, the study concluded that Nottage in *Ruined* succeeded in detracting from the feminist frame of reference of rape by presenting the issue of war rape against women specifically the Congolese as a crime against humanity and not against women only. She creates an awareness that rape committed in war time is not a consequence of war or sexual desire, but a carefully designed policy implemented to fulfil certain aims. Thus, she presents a new perspective of rape in times of war that deviates from the previous feminist ones. She dramatizes in her play the instrumental and strategic use of rape as a weapon which is equally effective as bullets and rockets.

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